



# INLAND STREAM

## INLAND WEST USA MISSION CENTER NEWS

Inland Stream Fall/Winter 2016-2017

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### ***“Playing with My Grandparent’s Nativity”***

By Brad A. Martell, Inland West Mission Center President

As a child I loved setting up my grandparent’s nativity under the Christmas tree. Each ceramic figurine had been carefully wrapped in paper and packed in a box with the wooden manger the previous year. I remember my excitement opening the box to see how the shepherds, wise men, angels, lambs, and baby Jesus fared over the year. Not all the figurines were pristine. One wise man had been broken for a long time with paper stuffed inside him to keep him from falling over. Some of the characters had chipped paint. But none of these imperfections bothered me.



Carefully, I unpacked the box, unwrapping all the pieces and laying them aside. Once the manger was unwrapped, I would place it under the tree and tuck in the straw. I would pull one of the Christmas tree lights down and stick it through the star shaped hole in the back of the manger. The angel went in first at the back, then Mary and Joseph. Outside the manger stood the wise men with their camels, shepherds with their sheep, the donkey Mary rode on, and a couple of cows. Baby Jesus in his cradle came last. I’m not really sure why I always put Jesus in last. That just seemed like the way to do it.

They would never stay the way I first placed them. I played with them, moving them around as though I wanted them to mingle and get to know each other. I would place a shepherd with two of the wise men as though they were in deep conversation. Maybe they discussed the star that led them there. The lambs would wander into the manger to sleep next to Jesus or munch on the straw. The angel came out to joke with the shepherds about how scared they were when the angel first appeared to them. And Mary and Joseph watched baby Jesus sleeping while the donkey stuck its head in through the side of the manger.

As we read about the birth of Jesus in the Gospels we learn about all these different characters that were guided by God’s Spirit to witness this miracle of new life for the world. A nativity brings all the Gospel stories into a re-telling of them all together. The wealthy with gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh standing side-by-side with poor shepherds and their bleating lambs, while angels illuminated hearts and minds. It is a story revealing sacred journey and sacred community. It is a story of God’s love made visible.

All those who came, whether guided by a star, guided by angels, or riding on a donkey, all made a sacred journey to a very humble place. Not just the humble setting ripe with animal smells, but the humble place within their very being. A sacred journey of true humility inward and outward, where they were filled with God’s hope, joy, love, and peace.

I still love to reflect upon the sacred community represented within the Christmas nativity. I reflect upon my sacred journey, once again arriving at the manger celebrating Jesus’ birth. How have I changed over the last year? What relationships and choices deepened my relationship with God, others, and all of Creation? How have I experienced God’s Spirit moving in my life and guiding me along my sacred journey of discipleship?

My prayer for all of us, individually and as a community, is experiencing even deeper encounter of God’s love through Jesus Christ this Christmas and throughout the New Year.

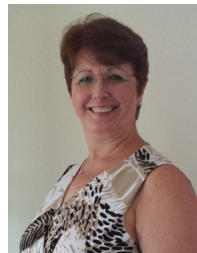
And don’t be surprised if you see me playing with any nativity I can get my hands on.



Several years ago the children of the Spokane Valley Congregation made the beautiful quilt that is pictured above. The children designed their own blocks and helped sew the blocks together with sewing machines. As the children were learning about being peacemakers, they really enjoyed making this symbol of peace. The quilt is on loan to the Children's Peace Pavilion. This past summer while in attendance at World Conference members of the congregation saw the quilt hanging on a wall in the Auditorium outside of the Children's Peace Pavilion. Seeing it there was a reminder of how excited the children were to share the quilt as a symbol that we should be peacemakers.

### Meet Denise White the New Inland West Mission Center Financial Officer

I grew up in a small town in East Central Ohio. I met my husband Blair at a Vocational High School. I was a cosmetologist for 6 years. I quickly recognized that the chemicals and my skin did not get along very well, so I attended school to get into accounting. I have been in the accounting field ever since.



I was the pastor of the Wheeling, WV congregation from 2006 through Feb. of 2016.

I started working for Community of Christ part time in 2010. I was a bookkeeper for Chicago Mission Center. In 2011 I also was the bookkeeper for Kentucky-Indiana Mission Center. In Sept. 2013 I started working full time for the church. I was the MCFO for Bountiful, Kentucky-Indiana, Eastern Great Lakes and Western Ohio Mission Centers and continued to be the bookkeeper for Chicago MC. In April 2016 I became the Field Support Minister for the North Central Field.

My husband and I have two children. Samantha is 28 years old and is a labor and delivery nurse at a hospital in Wheeling, WV. Our son, Ammon, is 24 and is in his final year at the University of Akron (Ohio) studying Mechanical Engineering.

### #GivingTuesday Update

On November 29, Community of Christ invited members and friends to celebrate #GivingTuesday by contributing to Worldwide Mission Tithes. Through your generous support, the church received over \$312,500 USD!

This amount includes the \$60,000 USD in matching gifts but only includes contributions from the USA. We will update the #GivingTuesday contribution total when we receive information from other areas.

Thanks to all those around the world who continue to generously support Christ's mission in a variety of ways! We are humbled and excited by your generosity of spirit, service, and financial support.

**Save the dates  
for 2017 Reunions!**

**Echo Valley  
June 22 - June 26**

**Samish Island  
June 24 - July 1**

**Redcliffe  
July 8 - July 14**

**Cascade  
July 19 - July 23**



Have you checked out Project Zion? Here's what its website says about it: "Featuring a variety of guests and panelists with roots in the Restoration tradition, including LDS and Community of Christ, Project Zion Podcast explores the unique spiritual and theological gifts the Restoration offers for today's world. Project Zion publishes full-length episodes every other Tuesday, with occasional "extra shots" of shorter, high impact content in between. Feel free to contact us with questions, comments, or episode suggestions!" (a contact form is provided on the website) Find it at: [www.projectzionpodcast.org/](http://www.projectzionpodcast.org/)



## Camp Cascade

Camp Cascade is looking for a caretaker for the summer of 2017. This position includes a stipend and is needed from June to August. If interested, please contact Ann Glenn at [aglenn59944@earthlink.net](mailto:aglenn59944@earthlink.net) or John Fisher at [jfisher@mindspring.com](mailto:jfisher@mindspring.com) as soon as possible.

## Meet Carla Long and Blair White, both Latter-day Seekers Ministers on the Utah Mission Team

Carla Long is from a small town in Kansas (682 people small, well, now 681 people small). After growing up on a hobby farm and excelling in FFA (Future Farmers of America) in her high school, Carla went to Graceland University and graduated with a BA in Mathematics. That is when the teaching profession called her into its ranks. After three (long) years of teaching high school mathematics, Carla realized that she felt a call to ministry in Community of Christ and decided to volunteer for a long term assignment with World Service Corps. She was sent to Binalonan, Pangasinan, The Philippines, where she preached her first sermon (half in English and half in Tagalog, simply put, it was terrible) and taught in a local school. After the assignment was over, Carla volunteered again for World Service Corps, but this time in Australia, where she learned what a caffeine addiction looked like, as well a deep desire to serve God and the church for the rest of her life.



Upon returning from Australia, Carla started seminary (Masters of Arts in Christian Ministries) with Graceland University and also taught in a local university for a year before accepting a position as a Financial Officer for the Sierra Pacific Mission Center in Northern California. After six years of blonder hair and a deep love of the weather (and the church!) in California, Carla accepted another job as a Financial Officer for the Eurasia Mission Field. After five years of wandering around Europe and developing a deep love of Dutch mayonnaise (and the church!) in Europe, Carla accepted a call to be a Latter-Day Seeker minister in Salt Lake City, UT, where she now resides with her husband, Kuzma.



Hi Folks. I am Blair White and I grew up in eastern Ohio attending the Wheeling, WV congregation. With the help of that loving congregation, God brought my high school sweet heart Denise into Community of Christ. We have two children; Samantha and Ammon. To prepare myself to respond to an inner sense of call to full-time ministry in my mid-30's I earned a Bachelor of Engineering degree. Yea I could have gone an easier route, but just in case that inner sense didn't work out, I sensed engineering was a safe bet for employment over Philosophy and Religion.

After a short boring stint in consulting engineering, in 1999 Denise and I purchased a family business started by my father and then sold it in 2004 so I could focus on Seminary.

In January of 2006 I became an Appointee Minister as I continued to work on my Master of Arts in Christian Ministries. Since that time I have served as Mission Center President in the Bountiful USA, Chesapeake Bay USA, East Asia and then Mid-Atlantic USA mission centers with various leadership, teaching and missional responsibilities along the way. Presently I serve on the Utah Mission Team focusing on Latter-Day Seeker Ministries within the Salt Lake Valley.

I enjoy meeting new people and cultures, and have used sailing as a missional tool while living on the Chesapeake Bay and New York Harbor; not so much yet in the Great Salt Lake as water levels are just too low. It's an honor and joy for me to have the opportunity to serve God's family within the Inland West Mission Center.



## *From around the Mission Center in 2016*

### **Blessing:**

- Wren Twilligear, Inland West General, (Nov 2015)
- Owen Ward, Billings, MT

### **Baptism and Confirmations:**

- Daniel Brooks, Salt Lake City, (Dec 2015)
- Shandra Brooks, Salt Lake City, ( Dec 2015)
- Joel Carver, Spokane Valley
- Sylvie Carver, Spokane Valley
- Eric Davies, Salt Lake City
- Jeessoo Davies, Salt Lake City
- Natalie English, Salt Lake City
- Jon Flynn, Whitehall, MT
- Chris Jackson, Salt Lake City
- Daniel Mason, Salt Lake City
- Meggan Molgard, Salt Lake City
- Matthew Moody-St. Clair, Boise (Dec 2015)
- Karalyn Hess, Salt Lake City
- Karalyn Pedersen, Salt Lake City, UT
- Kevin Pomeroy, Salt Lake City (Dec 2015)
- Kasey Ponce, Salt Lake City
- Cara Sacry, Whitehall, MT

### **Ordination:**

- Andrea Silva, Boise to Office of Elder
- Monica English, Salt Lake City to Office of Elder
- Eli Kelsey, Salt Lake City to Office of Elder
- Melanie Kelsey, Salt Lake City to Office Priest
- Brittany Mangelson, Salt Lake City to Office of Priest
- Joshua Mangelson, Salt Lake City to Office of Priest

### **Deaths:**

- Thelma De St. Jeor, Orem
- Lenard Easterday, Buhl, ID (Nov. 2015)
- Melvin Gahley, New Plymouth
- Dale Greer, Richland, WA
- Dale Kauffmann, Pocatello, ID
- Austin Merriman, Spokane Valley, WA
- Marylyn Oye, Spokane Valley, WA
- Connie Read, Spokane Valley, WA
- Venita Shockley, New Plymouth (Nov. 2015)
- Janice Wilden, Salt Lake City

If there are life events or transitions happening in your congregation please send them to Sandy Decker at [sdecker@cofchrist-iwest.org](mailto:sdecker@cofchrist-iwest.org).



Have you heard about the GoFundMission pilot project? Here some information about it:

GoFundMission is a crowd-funding pilot project of the USA mission fields of Community of Christ

GoFundMission is a pilot project of the Community of Christ USA Team of Apostles and the six Mission Fields in the USA.

Before any project is posted on GoFundMission it must receive support from a Mission Center President and then be reviewed by a Field Support Minister.

Campaigns are All or Nothing? This means projects are funded only if they reach or surpass 100 percent of their funding goal within 30 days. No funds are collected from donors unless the goal is reached.

For more information or to see the projects currently seeking funding go to: [www.gofundmission.org](http://www.gofundmission.org).



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# SPEC 2016





## Pictures from World Conference June, 2016



Pictures of Inland  
West Delegates  
between  
Legislative  
sessions in the  
Auditorium.



Robin Linkhart's ordination  
to Apostle.



Brittany Mangelson  
participates in a  
worship service.





The kids having fun during one of the breakout sessions.

## Pictures from Mission Center Conference Salt Lake City, UT October 8 & 9, 2016



Nancy Bowman was awarded the Financial  
Officer of the Year



Andrew Bolton was the guest speaker  
for Sunday morning



During our opening worship we celebrated our  
gratefulness with balloons.



Saturday night's catered dinner was delicious  
and the fellowship great.



Extreme Bingo led by Carla Long was a great way to end Saturday!



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